

## KNOWSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

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### Minutes of a meeting of the Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024 held in Knowstone Parish Hall

Present: Cllr J Pomfret (Chair), Cllr A Parry (Vice Chair), Cllr J Clarke, Cllr D Maidment, Cllr J Stanbury, Cllr C Dey, Cllr D McGregor

In attendance: W Vigus (taking minutes), D/Cllr R Milton (part), two members of the public

**23/64 Apologies for absence** - None

**23/65 Declarations of Interest** (re. matters appearing on this agenda) – None

**23/66 Approve Minutes** It was RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the last scheduled meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Cllr Pomfret proposed, Cllr Stanbury seconded, all agreed. A copy of the minutes was signed by Cllr Pomfret. This will be retained on file.

**23/67 Correspondence (not covered elsewhere on the agenda).**

Receipt of the following was NOTED:

- 29/11/2023 NDDC Planning “Comments acknowledgement for 77905”
- 30/11/2023 Email from Peninsula Transport re Rail Strategy
- 01/12/2023 Snow Warden Update - 1st Dec 23
- 01/12/2023 Devon CC News Update
- 04/12/2023 NDDC Planning applications received and decided
- 04/12/2023 Devon Communities Together – “Enterprising Halls”
- 05/12/2023 Devon Climate Emergency Newsletter
- 05/12/2023 Public consultations on changes to HPC’s construction site permits
- 05/12/2023 Recording | Devon County Council’s priorities for 2024/25
- 07/12/2023 Copy of email from Cllr Yabsley to R Sables re TTRO2454383
- 07/12/2023 NDC' Planning Forum for Town and Parish Councils
- 08/12/2023 Financial Support for the North Devon Ring & Ride Service
- 11/12/2023 NDDC Planning applications received and decided
- 11/12/2023 Devon Communities Together Newsletter
- 12/12/2023 Email re Peninsula Transport Strategy
- 13/12/2023 Closure of Pinpoint directory service
- 15/12/2023 Devon CC Update
- 15/12/2023 Email regarding parishioners’ concerns re green bins
- 18/12/2023 NDDC Planning applications received and decided
- 19/12/2023 Devon Community Resilience Forum conference info
- 20/12/2023 Funding support for Places of Worship repairs
- 21/12/2023 Notification that Batsworthy Fund applications are open
- 21/12/2023 A361 - NorthDevon Link Road - Traffic Bulletin - 21.12.23
- 27/12/2023 Email invoice re hall charger
- 29/12/2023 Enquiry re Knowstone village hall historical documents
- 01/01/2024 NDDC Planning applications received and decided
- 03/01/2024 Devon Climate Emergency Newsletter
- 03/01/2024 Email and Form to confirm Precept request
- 04/01/2024 OPCC Councillor Advocate Meeting Invitation
- 04/01/2024 NDC Planning Forum meeting Invitation
- 04/01/2024 Councillor Advocate OPCC event dates email
- 04/01/2024 Councillor Advocate OPCC Information email
- 04/01/2024 Councillor Advocate OPCC police stations reopening dates
- 05/01/2024 A361 Traffic Bulletin
- 05/01/2024 Peninsula Transport strategy consultation webinar dates

*Draft to be approved at the next scheduled meeting*

- 08/01/2024 NDDC Planning applications received and decided
- 09/01/2024 Community Speedwatch Annual Report
- 12/01/2024 Confirmation of extension to planning 77981 consultation
- 14/01/2024 New invoice from Parish Online #18UE034-0006

Cllr Pomfret stated that following mention by Cllr R Milton at the last meeting of a possible reduction in green bin collections (for cost saving purposes), he had attempted to find the minutes from the referenced North Devon District Council meeting but was unable to do so.

The following correspondence received after the preparation of the agenda was NOTED.

- 17/01/2024 A361 North Devon Link Road Traffic Bulletin dated 16.01.24
- 19/01/2024 Tree Services for Knowstone Parish Council
- 19/01/2024 Precept form reminder email
- 20/01/2024 Email from Bishops Nympton clerk re gritting of main access roads within area
- 21/01/2024 NDDC planning applications received and decided
- 21/01/2024 Roadmap – Devon County Council highways updates – January 2024
- 22/01/2024 OPCC invitation to the launch of Criminal Justice and You
- 23/01/2024 Police and Crime Commissioner's weekly column

Cllr Pomfret stated that the email about gritting had been recirculated. Cllr Stanbury confirmed that since the last scheduled meeting he had spoken to Matthew Verney with regard gritting the main access roads between Knowstone and Bishops Nympton parishes. It was AGREED that Cllr Pomfret would now write to decline the proposal.

### **23/68 Public Questions**

A member of the public stated that he had written to Selaine Saxby MP in the hope of clarifying the situation regarding the future of green bins. She had responded detailing that she had contacted the Chief Executive who clarified that there was no planned reduction in the number of green bin collections but an increase in charges to users was a possibility. The member of the public will pass the correspondence to the Clerk to retain on file.

The same member of public noted that the planning application at Stonelands Cross on the A361 had been approved by the Planning Officer in December 2023. Cllr Pomfret stated that he was unaware of this planning application being approved. The member of the public raised concerns over increased traffic flow onto the busy A361, impact on travelling holidaymakers, heightened risk of traffic accidents and the lack of local awareness of the planning application.

Cllr Clarke returned to the issue of green bins stating that both green bins and food waste bins were unavailable to order on the NDDC website even if willing to pay for them.

Cllr Pomfret clarified the public questions from the last scheduled meeting in relation to the parish council contributing to events taking place in the Parish Hall. He stated that it had been agreed that an extraordinary meeting was deemed unnecessary. The Parish Hall committee are reviewing their 2024 budget and will look at the proposed suggestions with regard the Film Night and the Book and Wine Club. It was RESOLVED that the matter of financing public events would be left to the Parish Hall to determine and that the Parish Council would not be contributing to these specific events. Cllr McGregor proposed. Cllr Maidment seconded, all agreed. It was AGREED that Cllr Pomfret would write a response to send to the member of public who made the proposals.

## 23/69 Finance

- (a) Copies of the accounts to date for 23-24 and bank reconciliation were reviewed. Cllr Pomfret outlined that the figure of £297.36 for miscellaneous and civic pride had been absorbed into the balance. Cllr Parry asked for clarification on Article 137. Cllr McGregor explained that this allows the Parish Council to spend outside their normal budget for example on assets such as generators. Cllr Pomfret confirmed that the generator and wiring had been added to the asset register. It was AGREED that depreciation of the generator would be discussed with the auditor at the end of the financial year.

It was RESOLVED to accept the accounts to date for 23-24 and the bank reconciliation. Cllr Parry proposed, Cllr Maidment seconded, all agreed.

- (b) It was NOTED that the Friends of the Log Cabin Diner had requested help with reclaiming costs for replacing batteries and pads at the defibrillator situated at the Log Cabin. The cost was detailed as £336 for replacement batteries and £68.40 for replacement pads. Cllr McGregor highlighted that the Batsworthy Fund is now open for grant applications of up to £2000. Cllr Parry stated that care needs to be taken over setting a precedence for the Parish Council to maintain this defibrillator as it was not acquired with Parish funds. It was AGREED that the existence of the defibrillator at the Log Cabin would be highlighted within the parish as there was felt to be low awareness of it. Cllr Stanbury felt that a defibrillator in Roachill would be useful.

D/Cllr Milton joined the meeting at 7.55pm.

It was AGREED that Mr K Dykes would be contacted for advice on maintenance contracts and purchasing replacement batteries and pads.

It was AGREED that Cllr Pomfret would reply to the Friends of the Log Cabin Diner asking if they had a constitution and a maintenance contract in place. If yes with regard the constitution, then they would be asked to apply to the Batsworthy Fund directly. If no, then the Parish council would do so on their behalf.

- (c) It was NOTED that a request had been received from the Parish Hall committee for £500 to put on subsidised events. Cllr Parry stated that this request should be included in the 2024 / 2025 budget. It was RESOLVED to make the payment of £500 to the Parish Hall committee. Cllr Parry proposed, Cllr Dey seconded, all agreed.
- (d) It was NOTED that a request had been received from a parishioner in Roachill to replace the noticeboard as water was getting in. It was AGREED Cllr Pomfret would contact Dave Herbert about checking all the parish noticeboards and providing a quote for the necessary work.
- (e) It was NOTED that an email had been received from Devon Ring and Ride requesting help to promote their services. It was AGREED that Cllr Pomfret would ask them to attend the Annual Parish Meeting to provide more information on their service and that any relevant information would be posted on the noticeboards.
- (f) It was RESOLVED to agree to settle the following accounts, Cllr Parry proposed, Cllr Clarke seconded, all agreed:

- |   |        |
|---|--------|
| • Wendy Vigus – minute taking and production for November’s meeting | £80.93 |
| • John Pomfret – reimbursement for EV point subscription            | £96.00 |

- Parish Online Annual Subscription £36.00

- (g) It was NOTED that £2,920.00 had been received from the Haresdown and Knowstone Moors Management Association.
- (h) Cllr Pomfret detailed that the four signatories now have the correct forms to sign for digital banking and that the next step would be completing a mandate form.
- (i) It was NOTED that the last invoice from Mrs Wendy Vigus for minute taking was charged at £12.45 per hour which was above the living wage. It was RESOLVED that the Parish Council would continue to pay above the living wage. Cllr Parry proposed, Cllr Clarke seconded, all agreed.
- (j) It was NOTED that confirmation had been received from Alison Marshall that she would carry out the audit at the end of the financial year.

### **23/70 Budget 2024 / 2025 preparation**

Cllr Pomfret circulated the revised budget for 2024 / 2025 and highlighted the following points;

- Increase in budget (+£700)
- Cybersecurity is already included in insurance policy
- Cllr Pomfret is working on a quote for housing the generator

Cllr Clarke raised issue of budget currently not balancing. Cllr Parry outlined that there were two options in place; either keep precept flat and use reserves to balance budget or increase precept to make budget balance. Cllr Pomfret stated that there is an expected budget overspend of £1700 but that there is £2000 in the contingency. He also noted that there is a £11,000 reserve. Cllr McGregor stated that consideration should be given to spending the reserve. It was AGREED that Cllr Dey would speak with Thelma Willmetts about the village pumps as this was raised as one way to spend some of the reserve.

It was AGREED that the precept would remain as is and that Cllr Pomfret would return the form to NDDC stating that this is the case. It was RESOLVED that the contingency would be removed from the 24/25 budget to ensure the budget balanced. Cllr Parry proposed. Cllr Clarke seconded, all agreed.

### **23/71 Internal Audit Report recommendations**

Cllr Pomfret stated that all the relevant documents had been posted to the website.

### **23/72 Electric Vehicle Charging Point**

Cllr Clarke stated that the charging point was being used more frequently and that hopefully this would reduce or eliminate charges from the installer for insufficient use.

### **23/73 Planning**

- (a) Applications notified since last meeting;
- Ref: 77981** – Erection of replacement building at Great Wadham Barton (based on pre application advice Ref 77905). Class Q application, permitted development.

Cllr Clarke highlighted how this type of application can follow on from Class Q approval and that part of the application states that no other Class Q conversions will be carried out on the site if the application is approved

It was RESOLVED to provide the following comment on 77981: "We wish to state that we support the application as long as consideration with regard landscaping is taken into account". Cllr Pomfret proposed, Cllr McGregor seconded, all agreed.

(b) Applications notified since the preparation of the agenda – None

(c) Other planning matters – None

### **23/74 Third Party Reports** (if present):

- a) **District Councillor** – D/Cllr Robin Milton mentioned that NDDC are currently reviewing budgets and it is important for the Parish Council to have an input to ensure that rural communities have a voice. He asked that any matters be passed to him so he can raise them with NDDC. He stated that it was likely that there would be a change of planning officer in the area due to staff shortages. He outlined that North Devon and Torridge are likely to kick off revision of their local plan in 2025. He noted that NDDC are currently managing to achieve a balanced budget. In terms of planning application 77981 D/Cllr Milton highlighted that the Parish Council needed to take care with regard where the red boundary lines were and whether the planning application covered all Class Q properties which had been applied for. Cllr Clarke confirmed that it appeared that it did. D/Cllr Milton stated that potholes are not part of his remit. Cllr Clarke asked for clarification on planning enforcement in North Devon. D/Cllr Milton stated that there are 1200 outstanding enforcement cases and that the lack of planning officers is making the issue worse. He stated that the NDDC is duty bound to investigate if a planning breach is reported. Cllr Clarke asked if there would be an increase to capacity on the Barnstaple to Exeter railway line. D/Cllr Milton stated that capacity is unlikely to increase but it is hoped that the current service will be maintained. D/Cllr Milton highlighted that he has submitted a paper to NDDC about the importance of rural areas to developers wishing to achieve their biodiversity requirements when submitting planning proposals.
- b) **County Councillor** – not present

### **23/75 Members Reports**

- (a) **Highways** - Cllr Dey outlined that, after a period of recuperation following an accident, she is relooking at speed reduction options for Roachill and wishes to speak about East Knowstone with Cllr Stanbury and to C/Cllr Yabesley about reducing the speed limit through Roachill from 60mph to 30mph.
- (b) **Footpaths & Beaples Stone** – Cllr Parry noted that a fallen tree had been removed by landowners from the footpath in Shapcott Wood and similarly in the wood by Owlaborough. It was NOTED that Cllr Pomfret and a parishioner had highlighted an issue with the footpath bridge between Owlaborough and Middlecott Farm and were awaiting a response from Highways. Cllr Parry is currently trying to acquire a new parish map from the new Footpath contact.
- (c) **Moors Management Association** – Cllr Maidment confirmed that the Association had moved to online banking and that the accounts were ready for auditing. The matter of bracken encroachment on Haresdown had been raised. Cllr Pomfret stated that he had liaised with the Association with regard the request from Natural England to survey the moors and had responded.
- (d) **Welcome Pack** – It was AGREED that Cllr Maidment would deliver the necessary welcome packs without the parish maps.
- (e) **Emergency Plan** – Cllr Pomfret confirmed that the Parish Hall would be taking responsibility for housing the generator but may ask for funding from the Parish Council. Funding has been received from the Devon Communities Together fund for emergency items such as torches and Hi-Viz. Cllr Pomfret detailed his current thinking on the location of the fuel safe.

(f) **Parish Hall** – Cllr Pomfret read out a report from the Chair of the Parish Hall committee detailing c. £1000 had been raised at the Christmas Bingo and that a successful Skittles night and Big Breakfast had taken place. The AGM had taken place during the previous week. Doors had been repaired, boiler checked and pickleball equipment purchased. The replacement cleaner has left.

(g) **Police Liaison** – Cllr Pomfret requested that a member of the Parish Council take on this role to help ease his workload.

(h) **Snow Warden** – Cllr Stanbury stated that the salt had been distributed around the Parish.

**23/76 Business at the Chairman’s discretion**

(i) Cllr Pomfret stated that a date needed to be agreed for the Annual Parish meeting and 23<sup>rd</sup> May was suggested.

(ii) Cllr Pomfret stated that one response had been received for the vacant position of Parish Clerk but that this was from someone located in Barnstaple. It was AGREED that Cllr Pomfret would readvertise with DALC and would contact local parish councils to see if their Clerk would be willing to take on the role. It was AGREED that Cllr Parry would look at advertising in Mole Valley Farmers.

**23/77 The date, time & venue of next meeting were confirmed** as Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7.30p.m. in the Parish Hall

The meeting closed at 21.25.

Signed as a true record .....

Date .....

*Draft to be approved at the next scheduled meeting*